

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 00907 251021Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3045

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 0907

EYES ONLY FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIES, NEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: APER, PFOR, PK

SUBJ: CRAIG BAXTER, LAHORE CONSUL GENERAL DESIGNATE

1. DURING PAST WEEK IN CONVERSATIONS FIRST WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND PAO AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITH DCM, AKRAM ZAKI, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE AMERICAS AND WESTERN EUROPE, HAS EXPRESSED HIS STRONG OPPOSITION TO ASSIGNMENT OF CRAIG BAXTER AS CONSUL GENERAL IN LAHORE. ZAKI HAS STATED HE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH BAXTER AND WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH HIM WHEN BAXTER DPO IN LAHORE. DURING HIS TENURE AS DCM IN WASHINGTON (1971-73) ZAKI MET BAXTER OFTEN ON SOCI*L OCCASIONS AND IN CONNECTION WITH OFFICIAL AFFAIRS, BAXTER HAVING BEEN PAKISTAN POLITICAL DESK OFFICER DURING EARLY PART OF ZAKI'S WASHINGTON ASSIGNMENT.

2. WHEN INFORMED BAXTER TO BE ASSIGNED AS CG LAHORE, ZAKI STATED HEATEDLY THAT BAXTER "WOULD NOT GET MY GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL AS LONG AS I HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT." ALTHOUGH WELL AWARE OF BAXTER'S EXPERTISE AND DEEP INTEREST IN SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, ZAKI TERMED BAXTER ASSIGNMENT TO LAHORE AS "A GOOD ONE FOR INDIA." DURING THE 1971 MILITARY ACTIONS IN EAST PAKISTAN, ZAKI SAID, BAXTER DISPLAYED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS OPEN HOSTILITY TOWARDS PAKISTAN. ZAKI CHARGED THAT BAXTER HAD ON ONE OCCASION EXPRESSED HOPE PAKISTAN WOULD BREAK UP AND THAT "WE (I.E., THE U.S.)

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 00907 251021Z

WOULD BE THERE TO PICK UP THE PIECES." ZAKI SAID THAT

AMBASSADOR HILALY, ON HEARING THE BAXTER'S ATTITUDE FROM ZAKI, INDICATED HE WOULD LODGE A PERSONAL PROTEST WITH DR. KISSINGER AT THE WHITE HOUSE, ALTHOUGH ZAKI DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER HILALY ACTUALLY DID SO.

3. ZAKI SAID HE HAS ALREADY MADE KNOWN HIS STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE BAXTER ASSIGNMENT TO AZIZ AHMED, MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND PLANS TO CONVEY THE SAME TO FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI. ZAKI ASSERTED IT WOULD NOT BE IN USG-GOP INTERESTS FOR BAXTER ASSIGNMENT TO TAKE PLACE.

4. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT BAXTER ASSIGNMENT SHOULD BE CANCELLED. I MAKE THIS RECOMMENDATION REGRETFULLY BECAUSE I WAS MOST FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH BAXTER AND I KNOW IN WHAT HIGH ESTEEM HE IS HELD BY THOSE MEMBERS OF MY STAFF WHO KNOW HIM. BYROADE

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